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E.O. 12065: GDS 8-11-86 (EATON, S.D.)
TAGS: AR, PINT, BL

SUBJECT: U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS
REF: STATE 8902

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AT THE REQUEST OF ARGENTINE CHARGE ROBERTO DALTON, DAS EATON AND DALTON MET AUGUST 11 TO DISCUSS U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS FOLLOWING THE EVENTS IN BOLIVIA AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOWDLER'S VISIT. DALTON SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE KEPT DIFFERENCES OVER BOLIVIA LOW-KEY, HE BELIEVED U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS HAD BEEN STRAINED TO A GREATER DEGREE THAN WAS RECOGNIZED BY THE GOA.

3. DAS EATON SAID HE AGREED THAT THE SITUATION RESULTING FROM DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS AND ARGENTINE ACTIONS ON BOLIVIA WAS SERIOUS, AND HE THEREFORE WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SET FORTH HIS VIEWS.

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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*****WHSR COMMENT*****

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PAGE 01

TOR:226/09:36Z

DTG:130158Z AUG 80

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4. REFERRING TO HIS EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH CHARGE DALTON (REFTTEL), DAS EATON SAID THERE WERE 4 OR 5 POINTS THAT HE WANTED TO EMPHASIZE:

-- THE U.S. REMAINS CONVINCED THAT IN SUPPORTING THE BOLIVIAN REGIME ARGENTINA IS NOT CONTAINING BUT RATHER FURTHERING THE CAUSE OF MARXISM. PRESIDENT-ELECT SILES IS NOT A MARXIST BUT OF THE CENTER-LEFT. HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WITHIN BOLIVIA. THE GARCIA-MEZA GOVERNMENT REPRESENTS NOT ONLY A SETBACK IN THAT SENSE, BUT WILL OVER THE LONG TERM STRENGTHEN THROUGH REACTION TO REPRESSION THE VERY MARXIST FORCES THE GOA FEARS.

— QUITE ASIDE FROM THE PREVIOUS POINT, THE GARCIA-MEZA GOVERNMENT DOESN'T MERIT THE SUPPORT OF ANY GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING ARGENTINA, BECAUSE OF ITS BLATANT CORRUPTION. THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP LOOKS ONLY TOWARD ITS OWN INTERESTS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COUNTRY'S WELFARE. THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT GARCIA-MEZA'S REGIME IS INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFIC. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE THOSE WITHIN THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY WHO ARE OPPOSED TO TRAFFICKING, THEY WILL BE UNABLE TO ACT BECAUSE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP. WE ARE WITHDRAWING OUR DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENTS IN BOLIVIA BECAUSE THE PROSPECT FOR COOPERATION IS SO DIM. IF ARGENTINA IS SEEN AS A PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER, THE ONUS OF THAT REGIME WILL RUB OFF ON ARGENTINA.

-- DESPITE ARGENTINA'S PRONOUNCEMENT'S, WE HAVE INFORMATION INDICATING THAT ARGENTINE MILITARY OR INTELLIGENCE ELEMENTS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING AND REALIZATION OF THE BOLIVIAN COUP AND CONTINUE TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION THAN THE GOA STATES. DAS EATON SAID HE UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT VIDELA'S STATEMENT THAT THE GOA HAD NO ROLE IN SPONSORING THE COUP BUT NOW SUPPORTS THE BOLIVIAN REGIME; HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO OUR OWN INFORMATION, ELEMENTS OF THE ARGENTINE MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES HAD FREQUENT CONTACT WITH THEIR BOLIVIAN COUNTERPARTS BEFORE THE COUP, PERHAPS WITHOUT REPRESENTING THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, AND IN THEIR COUNSELLING ADVOCATED A COUP. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH OUR INFORMATION WAS NOT EXACT, WE HAD REPORTS OF ARGENTINE PERSONNEL WEARING BOLIVIAN UNIFORMS, WITH ARGENTINE ACCENTS, INTERROGATING PRISONERS. DAS EATON, NOTING OTHER REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES, REFERRED TO A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE LONDON ECONOMIST ASSERTING ARGENTINA HAD SENT 200

ADVISORS TO BOLIVIA. PERHAPS THE FIGURE WASN'T THAT

PSN:037627

PAGE 02

TOR:226/09:36Z

DTG:130158Z AUG 80

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